(18 June 1918)

168

Hogarth -

Monday.

Dearest,

I wrote in such a hurry the other day to catch the post that I expect I didn't explain myself very clearly. I gather Valerie that you don't expect V.a L to lend themselves to stay with you. I only thought that as you had a chance of a permanent servant it was absurd for them to go if they'd decided not to stay beyond October. But I made it perfectly clear that the chance of getting Mrs Ford was what had changed the situation, & they agreed that it was perfectly reasonable that you should wish to know if there was a chance, & not in the least inclined. As a matter of fact ever since I first spoke of it Phyllis said that they knew you wanted them to stay because you'd be no better off in October. Nelly told me she meant to pack all her clothes, as she was sure you would

persuade her to stay on - & this was before your letter came. What they seem to fear is that you will be very charming, & that I shall give them no choice & coming back here - so now I've promised that I will ask them in October, but they are to be perfectly free to stay with you.

The reason why they are ready to go to you is that they think that if they [illegible] I want them

NYPL

The reason why they are ready to go to you if they think that I want them is that if they were certain that I did not want them they would prefer to take a place at once either in London or near Guildford - at least this is what they say. But I agree - its impossible to go into details, Also they change their minds every day, & I'm now going to spend a few days with them. I think Nelly would prefer that Irene should have a holiday, as her fear seems to be that there won't be enough for her to do, & also that she won't get on with Irene - but I

assure her that Winnie will be perfectly
easy & friendly. I believe myself that
there would be more chance of her
staying on if you made her a definite
offer of a place as your nurse that
if she stayed in a half & half place
with you, neither cook nor housemaid.
But it certainly would not do to
suggest this for some time. However
when you've got them you'd probably
see how the land lies for yourself.
It's frightfully difficult to describe, —
I always feel I'm writing
gibberish when I begin upon
their condition. They make my
head whirl.

But next time I write perhaps
I shall be able to discuss something
more interesting. Do tell
me about your letters — or send
them. Gertler has suddenly
asked to dine with us tonight —
God knows why.

Yr B.

We spent the week end with the Wabenlows —
their boat are unbelievably ugly & we

Jeicumed S's part with Margery.
Hz met Mrs. Finbery in the park.
She has married another man &
he has been divorced; a Finbery has
married another woman &
Jos Wagwood is marrying his
deaf governess.

NYPL

HAMILL 12/29/69

The Agents
Card. let
you know
them know
as soon as
you are
further
info: P.
9 Rue Pasteur
Friday afternoon.

June 21
1918

Dearest,

Irvie will have told you our adventures. As far as one can tell, I think we've been very lucky. I thought Mrs. Paton was rather particularly nice - very quiet & unpretending, & evidently delighted to be in a farm in the country. Mrs. Bridger whom I saw about her character said she'd only been for about 3 months, but she was a very good worker, & certainly came with a good character though she couldn't remember much about it. The only fault she had to find with her was that she was apt to be untidy - but Maid you owned to care that. As a matter of fact she's rather beautiful - something in the style of Bobo, with large dark eyes & a very sallow face. I suppose Irvie told you that she has a sister of 18 who has been in

the Agents
card. Will
you let
them know
as soon as
you're
better? P.
Mrs. Williams

9 Friday afternoon.

Will you
have to
pay
them at the
same
time.
LB.

June 21
1918

Dearest,

Irvie will have told you of our adventures. As far as we can tell, I think we've been very lucky. I thought Mrs. Paton was rather particularly nice – very quiet & unpretending, & evidently delighted to be in a farm in the country. Mrs. Bridger whom I saw about her character said she'd only been here for about 3 months, but she was a very good worker, & certainly came with a good character though she couldn't remember much about it. The only fault she had to find with her was that she was apt to be untidy – but I said you wouldn't care that. As a matter of fact she's rather beautiful – something in the style of Bobo, with large dark eyes & a very sallow face. I suppose Irvie told you that she has a sister of 18 who has been in

Terrick + would like a place in the country.
It struck me that you might turn
Mrs Talbot into your nurse, as she has
her own cheek, + have the sister as
well — But that can wait. I've
just rung up the Registry Office who
wanted to know the result of our visit,
& the woman there says she knows
that Mrs Talbot is very respectable
although she was only a short time
in the place. Keep The latest
just behind the 17 Club: so I could
easily go + see her one day next
week, if you want any final arrangements
made.

What on earth is happening with St. + L.
I don't know. They seem to have spent
most of the morning while I was out
sobbing in Leonard's room — but
they were so incoherent that he has
told them to calm down a talk to
me this evening. If the worst comes to
the worst, we can always do down
Abraham + get Mr. Gelt to do for us.
I think you're much better off without
them, as they'd have made endless
difficulties, + probably upset Terrick
too. I enclose

NYPL

HAMILL 12/29/64

June 18
1918

25 June 1918

Hogarth.

Tuesday.

Dearest,

I needn't say that I'm fearfully sorry that the affair has turned out in this way. I don't think I've ever spent a more miserable three weeks, & of course its been much worse for you. I didn't mean to discuss it any more in writing, but as you've written I think I'd better say that I don't think you quite understand what happened. I gather that you feel that Leonard was always against their coming. This is not so. He only wished it to be clear that we had the right of asking them back in October. He himself was the first to suggest that they should go to you on July 1st, & he has never changed his mind that it was best that they should do so. He spent an afternoon in the kitchen trying to persuade them to. He never produced a document for them to sign. I suggested to them, without telling Lenn, that we should write a

a statement promising to ask them to return in October, as it seemed at the moment, the only thing needed to persuade them to go. In the end they said this was unnecessary, & I only told Leonard my suggestion afterwards, & he never spoke a word to them about it. In fact he can't remember that I ever told him. The only point L. & I disagreed upon was as to whether it was best to tell them of our need for economy at first. He was against this, & I for it, & apt for this, in which I gave way, he has agreed with me about anything since. I think he's writing to Jan himself; but I wanted to make it clear that he never put the least pressure on me, & was never conscious of influencing them two points of view.

Since I wrote, V. & L. have told me the real reason why they did not want to go — at least they now say it is the real reason. They particularly ask me to write about it, but to talk to you when I see you. If they'd only told me at first we should have saved all this bother — & I can't think why they didn't. But it is nothing to do with the question

NYPL

of your wishing them to stay on (I read them of course the letter in which you made this perfectly clear) or of my wishing to get rid of them. Of course this doesn't alter the fact that they've treated you disgracefully. I think they're thoroughly ashamed of themselves.

However badly they've behaved, I rather wish Trixie had consulted me before she told them that you could not afford to keep them, but were unwilling to tell them so. When I came down to tell them about the difficulty, I found she had already told them, a very angry with me, had added all kinds of things about my dishonourable conduct. I suppose you must have told her. & of course it doesn't matter, though as she met Mrs Langston, one of my cooperative women, & told her also that my behaviour was not that of a lady, I've had to spend a good deal of time in these idiotic conversations, & I wish to goodness she had charged me with all my sins to my face. The servants want to stay on with us, but I've told them that we must discuss it later when we know for certain whether Leonard is going to get this editorship or not. We may hear next month.

I shan't hear from Sotheby's till July 4th. They sold the Mendelssohn poems separately, & only got £2 which is wretched. The story seems to me very bad now, & not worth printing, but I'll send it you if you like - I thought perhaps I could rewrite it. I mean to write a good many short things at Streatham & I wish you would consider illustrating them all. We want to bring out a series of short pamphlets in the autumn. Gertler admired your pictures greatly the other night. We talked mostly about his views of art: I didn't much like him, but I suppose he is what they call 'powerful'. I'm going to see Jacques Raverat's pictures at the New English.

Dent let Irene in her anger with me persuade you that I was cross at going to Regency Office - It's always a divine pleasure to do anything for you, & I trust to be a dear Duncan to talk me if I can do anything, though God knows. I shan't try another experiment as long as I live. I'm always in London. I've heard of several new offices. But I hope the new woman may do - I thought she looked much nicer than they usually do.

Yrs B.

NYPL

12/20/65 HAMILL

1918

8 July 1918?

Hogarth

Monday,

Dearest,

I've now heard from Sotheby. They sold the Thackeray for £45 - the reserve I put on it — the Meredith letters for £21 - the rest to you for £1-10. Fathers mss. for £1-8. They charge £8. 12 - 6 commission, so that your share, comes to £21 - 0 - 9. I enclose a cheque. It's not very good, but as we couldn't get a private buyer I suppose we must be content. But I don't think it's worth selling any more books there; I believe we should get as much from a bookseller like Quaritch, & we shouldn't have to pay a commission.

I fully intend to write my aesthetics for your decision, but I can't do anything just now except fold a staple 300 copies of R. M's story. It takes a good deal of time by hand, but we hope to

send out some cobis on Thursday. The parrokeets brought Borenius; & we all chattered away at a great rate, except Mary, who scarcely spoke. However we agreed to advance to Christian names, — We're probably going to print a story of her's. If you do any woodcuts for my story, they'd better be about the size of Carrington's in our first book, I should think — anything that you like - I don't see that it matters whether it's about the story or not. My only doubt is whether we shall print it after all: I don't myself think its altogether good; & I've an idea for another, which might be better - Still it might be worse. There was an awful hymn of praise to you & Duncan from the art critic the other day: Thank God, you don't write.

NYPL

1/23.

Do say how you are. Are you still feeling sick - I do wish it would stop - Still I've no doubt the baby will be something miraculous. You ought to burn my letters always.

HAMILL 12/29/69

July 16
1918

Monday. Hogarth.

Dearest,

I've been a bought this lovely sheet of paper – a dozen for 1/6 about – solely to write to you in; such is love; but I wish I had'nt talked about aesthetics. I was merely extremely interested in my own sensations about your picture. First however, I think your drawing is a most successful piece; a feat in the mood I wanted. As a piece of black & white it is extremely decorative — In fact in my language is already tainted. Then second or perhaps 4th third, many thanks for the cheque; if you still want a copy of Preludes, will you remit 3/6 — otherwise our accounts get wrong. But I daresay your appetite is satiated. Aughers tell me what you think of it; & should you say that you dont like it as much as Kew Gardens, I shant think less highly of you: but my jealousy, I repeat, is only a film on the surface beneath which is nothing but pure generosity. As for my aesthetic views, I can't do them justice, because I'm writing waiting for dinner, in the suburbs an open window lets in passionate male & female voices all the time. We have a mixed bracket opposite; & also the Richmond mortuary, which accounts for the extraordinary number of coffins one sees about. Coffins at luncheon, coffins as I come back from London: & the gentleman next door is dead of the influenza. However. the thing that happened was this. For some weeks I have been coming to dislike a chair covered in bright yellow cheks, bought at the Omega. It became like a mark rare spot which I touched each time I came into the room. I & brought your picture & the vase & the long flower in from the

dining room, & used to sit upon the yellow chair looking at it. It gave me exquisite pleasure — so cool so harmonious, so ~~so~~ exquisitely tinted; then I began to conceive the room as a whole, in relation to your picture. Now the yellow cover made me nearly frantic, & to cut a long story short, I went to Barnetts. But there I was paralysed, for though I dislike things after a time I find it very difficult to combine them in my mind. I refrained from buying. I went to the National Gallery. It was that, save to soldiers & sailors in uniform; I went to the National Portrait Gallery: it was that, save to the widows of officers. You'll hardly believe my disconsolate state. Finally I ~~en~~ went with the picture tempting me to excursions in building up rooms harmonious with it. Finally, I went to Soulamis. The first time I brought back 2 18th Century pieces of embroidery. At the sight of 18th Century embroidery my confidence in my own taste completely returned. I flung them upon the yellow chair — for which I now felt little short of physical rage. No. Something again was wrong. Back I went to Soulamis's, & now I have a blue-green Persian cover, on a yellow-white background. NYPL But you see what prospects are opened up. I came to the conclusion that there is a quality in your picture which, though perceptible at present much beyond me, but that in the main my aesthetic feelings are so undeveloped that I had better begin at the very beginning. But do you think that this Lemi-course as proper & coming to dislike one colour very much & liking a picture better points to some dort of live instinct trying to come to existence? I humbly hope so. At any rate, there is no doubt that your painting gives me more pleasure than any painting in the National Gallery. I got in there this afternoon.

Now letter is already so long a rather incoherent two I'm afraid, that I'd better perhaps draw to an end. But I must tell you my melancholy at the National Gallery. How. I ask, can you expect English people to like art when they are treated thus? There is a room devoted to Turners Return bad pictures; there is Millais' Gladstone, a

from the side (the blackness from the hind quarters of the horse is all sunk in a dead - stuff: the silk dress stands out quite stiffly); there are some large dull Italians; any number of the polished Dutch; & the rest I suppose, put away in the cellars. A herd of poor children were being swept from picture to picture by a wretched little servant girl, with a face like the inside of a penny bun; & her lecture always began "Now, children, dont stand too near or you cant see; & dont shuffle your feet so. D'you think they polish the floors for you to slide on? This is the descent of the Lord from the Cross. &c &c" Now I wish you'd tell me what is the point of Veronese: ~~of Delacroix, &c~~ a picture, I mean (a Goddess asleep & a man in armour approaching her: I see the nice warm ripe colours; but they dont much elate me; Delacroix I saw no point in: Botticelli, the round one of the Madonna may I daresay be beautiful, but to me it looks like a very perfect passage of pure style; but when I draw near the French I am at once amused & very much pleased: I like in particular to Berthe Morisot; her picture of 2 women in a boat is the kind of picture I like; it gives me great pleasure, & I can also understand it. Also the Renoir umbrellas: also a picture of still life on a mantelpiece by Vuillard; also a beach by Boudin (2): but I dont much care for Corot. The english I think are far best at landscape; they have a feeling for that; I like Cox & Constable: I like pictures of Norfolk heaths with windmills against the sky; I found a Turner which I thought very beautiful - a sketch, I suppose, once the iridescent haze had been left out. Then there were a great many Rubens drawings, or said to be Rubens, which convey nothing to me. Mancini I see no point in: I liked a picture of men round a table by Degros; & a very dark amber coloured landscape with one red cow in it, by an 18th Century Frenchman called perhaps Bourdon; that, again, is the sort of picture I should like to have. What I am driving at is this; could you do your way to lend me any more pictures? Could I have any from Gordon Square? — would (I like Fantin Latour's apples on a plate)

it be possible to get any lent me at the Omega or Bayreuth ya small sum?
I want to change such as I have about; a few are badly in want of
some at Aldeham. I'm now thinking of going to the Allied Artists;
& I will give you an account of them; since I suppose that there may
be the same curious interest in a writer's account of pictures as the
other way round. And yet the queer thing is that I accept your or
Duncan's view of writing absolutely seriously. I dont think
your drawing, by the way is too big; the difficulty is, suppose we
decide not to print that story after all?

In the world of letters Lytton is still predominant. I think his fame
has changed him, as love might; he is immensely appreciative, even
tender; jumps up & sees withered virgins like Vernon Lee, & leaves
them gibbering with ecstasy. He spent last week end with the
Duchess of Marlborough. Mrs Asquith, poor woman, does for herself
by talking about books, & as her method is to say startling things
& she can't settle down to discuss them, she becomes a fearful
bore, & as wrong as she can be. Still, he admits that its all
very pleasant; though agitating, because he fears it will soon die
down. We are going to Tidmarsh on Saturday. Gumbo is
going to be there - she has renounced John Lane, I suppose, that Mrs H. Ward accuses Lytton of
as can be - you heard, I suppose, that Mrs H. Ward accuses Lytton of
the Lit. Supp.t of being a pro-german on account of the brutality
of his methods? Adrian has become a violent politician;
& delivered an address on Peace to my Guild with the greatest success.
He a Karin talk of sending troops near us in August; possibly at
Southease. I wish he hadn't married her (you put this 2)) A good cob of a
the locked drawer, if not the W.C. Dentyne woman, does for herself
woman; but so hearty & so without shade or softness. Age too
will harden her; as it is she takes a businesslike view of life -
duty & death two I daresay; & her family will cosset her. I think
it absurd to call Adrian a bore; he has great distinction; not that
I could ever live with him tolerably. Shall we get up a pageant
of the Gouts? Waller & Pippa are dining with us I think. Thank
God for old Snow: I hope I may see her. Though I really prefer
thinking of her since she dislikes me, I fear. I hope you'll bring the
unborn baby up to appreciate me; I'm already half in love with her.
It will have lovely great eyes: soft hair: a divine mouth: & then only
think what a gifted lovable sprite it will be
so understanding from its earliest years, &
as wise as an idol, & as witty
as a kingfisher bird

Yrs B.

HAMISE 6/1/66